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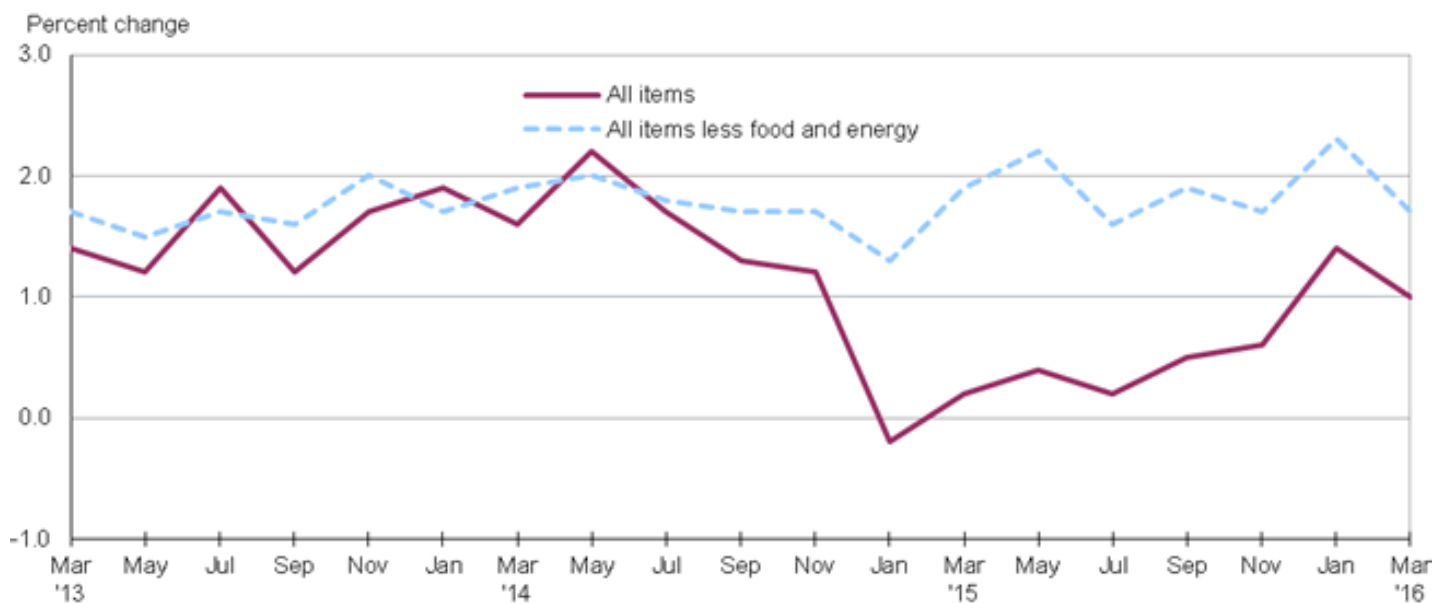
Consumer Price Index, Washington-Baltimore – March 2016

Area prices up 0.6 percent since January and 1.0 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Washington-Baltimore increased 0.6 percent over the last two months, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted the rise was led by a 0.6-percent increase in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index and the food index also rose since January, up 1.0 and 0.3 percent, respectively. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U increased 1.0 percent, due largely to a 1.7-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. (See [chart 1](#) and [table A](#).) Since March 2015, the food index rose 1.3 percent, while the energy index fell 9.1 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Washington, D.C., March 2013–March 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

After declining 0.4 percent from November to January, the food index increased 0.3 percent over the last two months. Prices for food away from home rose 0.6 percent over the last two months; those for food at home inched up 0.1 percent. Higher prices for cakes, cupcakes, and cookies; soups; and breakfast cereal contributed to the increase in the food at home index.

Food prices rose 1.3 percent over the year, as prices for both components also increased. Prices for food away from home advanced 2.1 percent and those for food at home increased 0.6 percent since last March.

Energy

Since January, the energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, rose 1.0 percent due to increases in both utility (piped) gas service and electricity prices, up 9.9 and 1.3 percent, respectively. Prices for gasoline declined 1.4 percent over the last two months.

Energy prices fell 9.1 percent over the year, led by a 20.9-percent drop in gasoline prices. Utility (piped) gas service prices also declined, dropping 12.6 percent, while electricity prices rose 6.3 percent since last March.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.6 percent since January. The increase was due largely to higher prices for shelter (0.9 percent) and apparel (4.4 percent). Moderating the increase in the all items less food and energy index were lower prices for education and communication (-0.7 percent) and household furnishings and operations (-1.1 percent) over the last two months.

Since March 2015, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.7 percent. The increase was due largely to an over-the-year rise in shelter prices (2.3 percent), as the owners' equivalent rent of residences index was up 1.9 percent. Higher prices for medical care (3.9 percent) and education and communication (3.7 percent) also contributed to the rise. Lower prices for household furnishings and operations (-2.4 percent), among others, moderated the increase in the all items less food and energy index since last March.

Table A. Washington, D.C. CPI-U 2-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month	2-month	12-month
January.....	0.4	2.7	0.1	1.8	0.4	1.9	-1.0	-0.2	-0.2	1.4
March	1.3	2.8	0.9	1.4	0.6	1.6	1.0	0.2	0.6	1.0
May.....	0.1	1.8	-0.2	1.2	0.4	2.2	0.6	0.4		
July	-0.2	1.4	0.5	1.9	0.0	1.7	-0.2	0.2		
September.....	1.3	2.8	0.6	1.2	0.2	1.3	0.5	0.5		
November.....	-0.7	2.1	-0.2	1.7	-0.4	1.2	-0.3	0.6		

The Consumer Price Index for May 2016 is scheduled to be released on Thursday, June 16, 2016, at 8:30 a.m. (EDT).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Washington-Baltimore is published bi-monthly. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 89 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners

and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 28 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 87 urban areas across the country from about 4,000 housing units and approximately 26,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.








































The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and Washington in Maryland; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, and Manassas Park and the counties of Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, King George, Loudoun, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren in Virginia; and the counties of Berkeley and Jefferson in West Virginia.






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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Mar. 2015	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016
All items ⁽¹⁾		155.519		156.493	1.0	0.6	
Food and beverages ⁽¹⁾		156.080		156.506	1.2	0.3	
Food ⁽¹⁾		157.432		157.971	1.3	0.3	
Food at home		147.966	148.193	148.146	0.6	0.1	0.0
Food away from home ⁽²⁾		166.771		167.780	2.1	0.6	
Alcoholic beverages ⁽²⁾		137.112		135.989	-0.2	-0.8	
Housing ⁽¹⁾		168.587		169.966	1.9	0.8	
Shelter		180.545	181.232	182.138	2.3	0.9	0.5
Rent of primary residence ⁽¹⁾ ⁽³⁾		200.173	200.100	200.947	1.6	0.4	0.4
Owners' equivalent rent of residences ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾		180.808	181.081	181.501	1.9	0.4	0.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence ⁽³⁾ ⁽⁴⁾		180.799	181.073	181.490	1.9	0.4	0.2
Fuels and utilities		183.726		187.463	2.4	2.0	
Household energy		172.076	174.102	176.685	1.2	2.7	1.5
Gas (piped) and electricity ⁽³⁾		165.696	167.752	170.322	1.9	2.8	1.5
Electricity ⁽³⁾		181.515	182.987	183.905	6.3	1.3	0.5
Utility (piped) gas service ⁽³⁾		103.862	107.309	114.162	-12.6	9.9	6.4
Household furnishings and operations		88.203		87.209	-2.4	-1.1	
Apparel ⁽¹⁾		95.831		100.029	-1.1	4.4	
Transportation ⁽¹⁾		135.458		135.805	-4.5	0.3	
Private transportation		132.919		133.611	-4.4	0.5	
Motor fuel		166.830	154.640	164.492	-21.0	-1.4	6.4
Gasoline (all types)		166.603	154.386	164.345	-20.9	-1.4	6.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular ⁽⁵⁾		163.625	150.680	161.480	-22.2	-1.3	7.2
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade ⁽⁵⁾		181.428	170.720	179.213	-16.3	-1.2	5.0
Gasoline, unleaded premium ⁽⁵⁾		188.259	178.829	185.272	-15.5	-1.6	3.6
Medical care ⁽¹⁾		182.506		183.828	3.9	0.7	
Recreation		118.290		120.453	1.6	1.8	
Education and communication		154.163		153.058	3.7	-0.7	
Other goods and services ⁽¹⁾		178.837		177.702	0.5	-0.6	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		124.144		124.742	-1.6	0.5	
Commodities less food and beverages		106.728		107.387	-3.5	0.6	
Nondurables less food and beverages		131.027		132.062	-5.5	0.8	
Durables		79.989		80.348	-0.6	0.4	
Services		176.669		177.903	2.3	0.7	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter		143.132		143.825	0.2	0.5	
All items less medical care ⁽¹⁾		153.797		154.747	0.7	0.6	
Commodities less food		108.118		108.727	-3.3	0.6	
Nondurables		143.376		144.088	-1.9	0.5	
Nondurables less food		131.603		132.489	-5.0	0.7	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Washington-Baltimore, D.C.-Md.-Va.-W.Va., (December 1997=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Mar. 2015	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016
Services less rent of shelter		173.124		173.962	2.2	0.5	
Services less medical care services		176.053		177.282	2.1	0.7	
Energy ⁽¹⁾		169.582	165.687	171.291	-9.1	1.0	3.4
All items less energy		153.228		154.153	1.7	0.6	
All items less food and energy ⁽¹⁾		153.520		154.506	1.7	0.6	

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a November 1996=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a November 1997=100 base.

(3) This index series was calculated using a Laspeyres estimator. All other item stratum index series were calculated using a geometric means estimator.

(4) This index series underwent a change in composition in January 2010. The expenditure class now includes weight from secondary residences, and has been re-titled "Owners' equivalent rent of residences." The item stratum "Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence" excludes secondary residences.

(5) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

Note: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.